



1
00:00:01,000 --> 00:00:04,047
Landing an ER-2, NASA's
civilian version

2
00:00:04,047 --> 00:00:07,053
of the Air Force's
high-altitude U-2S plane,

3
00:00:07,053 --> 00:00:08,090
can be tricky.

4
00:00:08,090 --> 00:00:10,080
(Aircraft and car noise)

5
00:00:10,080 --> 00:00:13,040
It's wings give the aircraft
glider-like qualities,

6
00:00:13,040 --> 00:00:16,020
making it sensitive to
crosswinds.

7
00:00:16,020 --> 00:00:18,073
The ascent and descent
rates are fast and steep.

8
00:00:18,073 --> 00:00:21,063
And since its pilot must
remain in a pressure suit,

9
00:00:21,063 --> 00:00:23,087
sometimes for a long
period of time,

10
00:00:23,087 --> 00:00:28,057
even normal operations inside
the ER-2 can be difficult.

11
00:00:28,057 --> 00:00:30,033

"It's hard for him
to judge altitude

12

00:00:30,033 --> 00:00:31,070
in this particular aircraft,

13

00:00:31,070 --> 00:00:33,087
and he has to actually stall
the aircraft on every landing.

14

00:00:33,087 --> 00:00:36,013
The plane has to be
in a full stall.

15

00:00:36,013 --> 00:00:39,067
I'm basically...I'm his co-pilot
basically in the car."

16

00:00:39,067 --> 00:00:43,010
That's where the agency's
recently acquired Dodge Charger

17

00:00:43,010 --> 00:00:45,023
safety chase car comes
into play.

18

00:00:45,023 --> 00:00:47,037
(Sound of car accelerating)

19

00:00:47,037 --> 00:00:49,003
The specially designed vehicle,

20

00:00:49,003 --> 00:00:51,070
driven by an experienced
ER-2 pilot,

21

00:00:51,070 --> 00:00:55,000
also called mobile pilot,
charges down the runway

22

00:00:55,000 --> 00:00:57,083

at high speed as the
driver calls out data

23

00:00:57,083 --> 00:01:02,013

to the ER-2 pilot -- things like
distance in feet to the runway,

24

00:01:02,013 --> 00:01:05,010

taxiing details, and any
other critical information

25

00:01:05,010 --> 00:01:08,093

to help facilitate a
smooth and safe landing.

26

00:01:08,093 --> 00:01:14,090

"There's 20 at the T...there's
10, eight, six, four...four,
three,

27

00:01:14,090 --> 00:01:19,033

two, a little right rudder, one,
a little right rudder, inches..."

28

00:01:19,033 --> 00:01:22,027

The Air Force has a
history of relying

29

00:01:22,027 --> 00:01:25,043

on chase vehicles
for landing safety.

30

00:01:25,043 --> 00:01:28,040

Following their lead, Dryden's
Airborne Science Program

31

00:01:28,040 --> 00:01:31,040

has leased the government-owned
Charger for five years.

32

00:01:31,040 --> 00:01:35,037

And managers say the car
has added an extra value

33

00:01:35,037 --> 00:01:38,087

of safety to ER-2 flight
operations.